

### REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

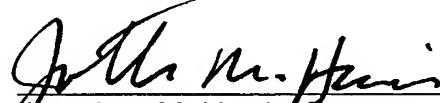
In the parent case (Serial No. 09/630,246), the Examiner rejected claims 15-26, but indicated claims 27-33 contained allowable subject matter. Applicants opted to cancel the rejected claims 15-26 to expedite issuance of the allowed claims in the parent case. Applicants file this continuation and preliminary amendment, however, to secure allowance of previously submitted claims 15-26.

In the parent case, the Examiner's stated reason for allowing claim 27 was that "[I]ndependent claim 27 includes the limitations of the bus having a variable stub length and the expander controlling the stub length of the bus." In this preliminary amendment Applicants resubmit claims 15-26 generally in the same form as in the parent case, with two exceptions. The preamble of claim 15 now reads that the drive assembly is "adapted to be coupled to a bus having a variable stub length." Further, the claimed expander now "controls the stub length of the bus." At least for the reasons acknowledged by the Examiner as to the patentability of the claims from the parent case, Applicants contend that the presently presented claims are in condition for allowance.

If any fees or time extensions are inadvertently omitted or if any fees have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Hewlett-Packard Company Deposit Account Number 08-2025 and enter any time extension(s) necessary to prevent this case from being abandoned.

Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,



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